

VZCZCXRO1318
OO RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHFL RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV
RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #2662 3011343
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 281343Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4194
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002662

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/27/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH VIEW OF PKK TALKS WITH IRAQ

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (c) Summary: Turkish MFA Apakan gave Ambassador on October 27 a disappointed account of the talks in Ankara the day before with the Iraqis regarding the PKK. He did not dismiss the ideas brought from Baghdad, but said Turkey needs actions that will have an impact now. Apakan noted that the Iraqis were professional and approached the topic with great seriousness, but made clear the limits of their capabilities. The participation of KDP and PUK representatives in the talks was handled as well as could be expected, and the government here is being excoriated by the media for allowing them in. For Apakan, the next steps are Secretary Rice's visit, the Istanbul Iraq Neighbors Ministerial, and PM Erdogan's meeting with the President November 5. He appealed for the President's staff to equip him with tangibles on the PKK to discuss with Erdogan that will help save a rapidly deteriorating relationship. End Summary

12. (c) Apakan said that both private ministerial talks and a full delegation lunch and discussion covered the same issues. Iraq presented three proposals: for aerial surveillance of the border, to establish/re-establish border posts, and to set up a Turkey/Iraq/MNF-I military coordination cell. The Iraqis claimed that PKK front offices have been closed and Makhmour camp cleared of PKK. They also apparently said they will try to help Turkey recover its soldiers held hostage by the PKK if they can. The Turks gave their version of the facts on front offices and Makhmour. Apakan said Turkey has pictures of the border and other information sharing arrangements with the US and that the border station and cooperation cell proposals are not responsive actions. In any case, they will take a long time to realize. Missing were real time action items that would show tangible support to Turkey on the deeply emotional issue here of cross-border commando raids on Turkey.

13. (c) According to Apakan, Babacan complained about "some groups" in northern Iraq who openly support the PKK through their political statements and other actions. PUK rep and KRG minister Ahmet said that Turks and the Iraqi Kurds had been friends, but now there are gaps; if Turkey would speak with and recognize the Iraqi Kurds, then it should be possible to solve this problem. Apakan told Ambassador that Turkey regards this as a "recognize us and then we can talk" threat, and Turkey will not accept it. He noted with sarcasm that the KRG cannot say that the terrain is harsh, the PKK difficult, and effective action against it virtually impossible and then argue that if there were dialogue everything would become possible and all problems would be solved.

14. (c) The presence of KDP and PUK representatives had been a problem, Apakan acknowledged, referring to Ambassador's conversations with Iraq Coordinator Celikkol and others. The Iraqis on this issue had insisted that Turkey accept the

unity and totality of their delegation. Ultimately, Turkey arranged for initial substantive conversations tete-a-tete among relevant Turkish and Iraqi ministers and then, in the large group, opted essentially to ignore the presence of the offending members. It looked to Ankara like they had accommodated the PUK and KDP presence and allowed them to speak, but for the Iraqi Kurds, we assume there was snub enough to rankle.

15. (c) Assessing the overall tone, Apakan called the discussions useful. The Iraqis came in good faith and did their best. Apakan said Iraq is and will remain a country Turkey wants to be on friendly terms with. It recognizes that the central government and really all the Iraqi authorities lack resources fully to confront the PKK, especially given the other terrorist problems they face. The Turkish delegation expressed no anger, made no threats, and was sad that Iraq is not in a position to help it. The Turkish press release on the talks, he asserted, tried not to blame Iraq, and he believed that Iraq's formal statement similarly avoided assigning blame) though, at least here, the unattributed commentary by Turkish officials is harshly critical. Apakan said that at the talks' conclusion, the Iraqis asked again what steps Turkey would like to see. According to Apakan, the reply was simple: stop the PKK's terror attacks across the border and end its presence in northern Iraq.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON